

ETHAN'S SILENCE, ISOLATION AND ILLUSION :
A STUDY OF THE MAIN CHARACTER'S CONFLICT
IN EDITH WHARTON'S ETHAN FROME

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By :

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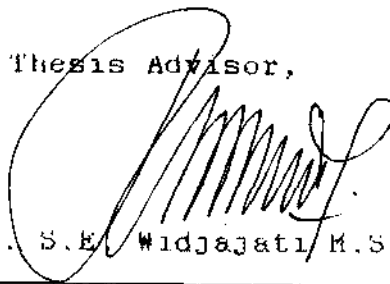
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is made to analyze the major character in Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome*. *Ethan Frome* is the most famous novel of Edith though she does not pretend to accept this assumption.

With the title of *Ethan's silence, isolation and illusion*, the writer wants to find out why Ethan becomes silent, isolated and illusory through intrinsic elements. The silence of Ethan is symbolic of his inability to communicate with his wife and fellow friends in order to dispel his loneliness. Ethan's isolation is enforced upon him by outside circumstances. After his marriage, Ethan is tied even closer to the stark farm. He is isolated physically from the world at large and he is also cut off from the possibility of human fellowship. His father's death and the misfortunes following it had put a premature end to Ethan's studies.

The silence and isolation have deepened about him year by year. He has had no time for the convivial loiterings in the village since he has to carry the burden of farm and mill. The loneliness of the house has grown more oppressive than that of the fields when his mother has fallen ill.

Ethan finds some means of escaping the reality of silence and isolation through illusion. Illusion, for Ethan, is also happiness. His silence, isolation and despair are appeared in a deep illusion. For instance, why has he not kissed Mattie when he holds her there? Ethan feels confusedly that there are many things he ought to think about, but through his tired brain only one sensation throbs. It is the warmth of Mattie's shoulder against his.

To escape from Zeena, the dominant wife, and Starkfield, Ethan and Mattie try to commit suicide together by sledding down into the big tree. They are not dead but still survival. Both of them are sicker than before. Now Zeena becomes their devoted nurse. She is the only one who cares of Ethan and Mattie.